

The Miksovsky Family Journal 2010

Happy Holidays! We hope our letter finds you well.

JANUARY



Our year starts in Hawaii, where the girls still prefer the pool over the ocean. Jan makes each one of them go into the ocean at least once. They retreat to the pool.

We've finally begun moving out of the toddler years. Sabriya says goodbye to the little red doggie pacifier ("Doggeesh") she has carried everywhere for two years. Her sisters are growing too. One day we take Bree to a new kids' play area at Bellevue Square, and Anya and Liya find they're *too tall* to be able to play there.

Anya's devoting a significant portion of 2nd grade to creating posters she has to present in class. In the course of the year, Anya presents posters on: herself, geysers, hurricanes, peregrine falcons, her piano teacher, the state of Rhode Island, and a fictitious "Cloud Island". Just for fun, and to her teacher's delight, Anya also creates a poster on opals at the start of her summer vacation.

FEBRUARY



To avoid Olympic crowds at Whistler, we make a winter trip with three other families to quieter and snowier Big White, BC. The older girls are now good enough to ski through trees and down black diamond runs. Anya insists Jan take her down the intimidatingly named, "Dragon's Tongue". Jan, somewhat handicapped on a snowboard, has to skid down the narrow, steep, bumpy run.

MARCH



Cozi celebrates its 5th anniversary, and wins an industry award for "Best Consumer Product of 2009". Given the economic turmoil, business is good.

The girls are constantly finding new projects—our house is buried in drawings and paper crafts. A typical project of Bree's reveals her color preference: little purple pieces of paper glued to a big purple sheet of paper, decorated with purple marker. Inspired by a certain website, Liya creates the Liyapedia, which includes entries such as: "Facts about Slippers: They are nice and cozy. They make your feet warm and you wear them inside. They are slippers!"

We enjoy a visit from Angela's friend Sarah and her daughter Ruthie. Anya and Liya introduce Ruthie to important Seattle sites—mostly chocolate stores.

Angela and Anya start a Mother-Daughter book club. First selection: *The Mysterious Benedict Society* by Trenton Lee Stewart. More on this book later.

APRIL



In the spring the whole house falls sick. This is the first time since having kids that both Jan and Angela have been sick at the same time. "Ugh... Can you get the kids?" (cough) "Ugh... No, can you?"

Jan's brother Chris comes up from San Francisco for a short visit. His business, humangear, is doing very nicely in sales of its popular GoToob travel products.

When Anya and Liya dig a bunch of worms out of our yard, Jan digs up do-it-yourself plans for a worm bin. The girls come to the hardware store for parts, and do much of the construction—even Bree helps lay down some wet shredded newspaper for bedding. We now recycle an (extremely small) portion of our vegetable waste straight back to dirt.

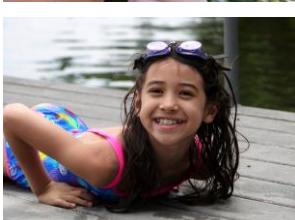
MAY



Liya loses her first tooth. Anya gets her braces off. (She'll need them back on again in a few years.) Not to be outdone, Jan gets reading glasses. Angela's ability to help Jan shop for glasses is compromised by her unsuppressed laughter.

On a rainy Sunday at the home of Jan's co-founder, Robbie, we hold a contest to build the tallest tower out of spaghetti and tape that can support a marshmallow. (Try it: www.marshmallowchallenge.com.)

JUNE



On a drive to school, a discussion about how movies are made becomes: "Let's make a movie!" Anya and Liya include their schoolmate Kaila in storyboarding a short script. A screen test shows Kaila to be a natural; she stars in scenes directed by Jan and shot by Anya and Liya. Consistent sunny weather turns out to be the biggest obstacle to finishing shooting. Working title: "The Bead Tree". If we ever get it all edited, you'll see it in 2011.

A road trip around part of the East Coast turns out to not be nearly as harrowing as we'd feared—as long as we're willing to toss aside all our rules on candy, iPhone games, and watching movies. Over ten days, we visit Owen and Nicole in NJ, stepbrother Stephen in NY, David and Tonya in NJ, Fiona and Peter in NY, Jan's Choate roommate Tolomy, relations Marlee and Brooke in CT, and cousins Albert and Melissa in NJ. Chris joins us for part of the road trip, including side trips to see our uncle's old farmhouse in the Catskills, the delightfully touristy Mystic, CT, and charming Watch Hill, RI. There the girls ride the old boardwalk merry-go-round; Anya and Liya each manage to grab a brass ring.



JULY



Girls do art camp, swim camp, jump rope camp, and rock climbing camp. Whew.

For her third birthday, Sabriya selects a theme: watermelon. Angela makes three different watermelon cakes before finding one that both looks and tastes good. This establishes a 2010 trend towards overly complex children's birthday parties.

We start a wonderful vacation with a simple trip across town—to a waterfront terminal where we board a ship for Alaska. This is a Chen family reunion: Johnny, Zenni, cousins Anthony and Brian, E-moon and Cheng-nan are all there. We have amazingly rain-free weather for the trip. (SE Alaska is normally rainier than Seattle!) In Juneau we walk on a glacier, peering into deep blue holes in the glacier's surface. Further north, we watch huge chunks of the Hubbard Glacier calving into the sea. Jan and Angela actually take a dip in the ocean at Sitka—dressed in dry suits for a snorkel trip. We're surprised by the amount of color in the frigid water: purple abalone, green sea lettuce, bright orange seaweed, black rockfish, silver herring, and pink anemones. Anya joins Jan for an afternoon of kayaking. All three girls have fun playing with their cousins, sloshing around in the pool, and making new friends at the on-board kids' program.

AUGUST



For her 7th birthday, Liya asks Jan to create a treasure hunt based on the book, *The Mysterious Benedict Society*. The book describes a group of children solving puzzles to join a crime-fighting team headed by the mysterious Mr. Benedict. One character always carries a red bucket of tools (rope, flashlight, etc.), so we assemble similar tool buckets for each guest. Jan concocts a series of puzzles that require those tools. The game kicks off with a video message from the mysterious (and narcoleptic) Mr. Benedict, played with relish by our friend Bruce. The kids then use phones to scan QR barcodes to obtain cryptic directives, e.g.: look *under* the fireplace. They eventually discover that our 1920s fireplace contains a secret covered hole (for sweeping ashes into a chamber in the basement). The girls use ropes and magnets from their tool buckets to retrieve the next clue from the bottom of the hole. Bruce's final video message has the ecstatic Mr. Benedict alternating between falling asleep and telling them it's time for treats.

Angela has knee surgery in preparation for a larger operation to redo her ACL early next year. She is crushed to miss what might be an amazing ski season.

SEPTEMBER



Anya starts third grade, Liya starts second grade, and Bree starts preschool at a Montessori school. Liya's class dives into the second grade poster projects. Both Bree and Liya take after-school ballet once a week. Anya welcomes fall because it means she gets to play soccer again on her team, the Chihuahuas.

Angela begins a semester as a teaching assistant in Systematic Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary's Seattle campus. She guest-lectures on the Trinity, which requires eye-crossing research into ancient Greek world views.

OCTOBER



Jan and Liya enjoy a weekend trip together to charming Victoria, BC, where we have high tea at the Empress Hotel. Liya eschews carrot sandwiches for truffles.

Each student in Anya's 3rd grade class picks a character to research and *be* for the grade's annual wax museum exhibit. They hold a pose for twenty minutes while their parents and the entire K-3 lower school mill around them. ("The only time your child may ever stand still for 20 minutes," quips the teacher.) Anya dons an apron and head-wrap to play the part of abolitionist Harriet Tubman.

All three girls go door-to-door trick-or-treating together for the first time.

NOVEMBER



Anya, inspired by Liya's party, asks Jan to create a treasure hunt for her 9th birthday party. This one has guests searching for three-eyed aliens that have crashed-landed nearby. The children puzzle over a map, "obtained from the wreckage of the spacecraft." They discover that their special alien flashlights emit ultraviolet light, revealing glowing alien writing on the map. Chaperoned by grandma Lyn and uncle Chris, Anya and her friends scour the neighborhood to find "LOST" posters on telephone poles (like lost pet posters, only for lost aliens). The clues eventually lead to a saucer full of cute Lego aliens in our backyard.

We have an unusually early snowstorm before Thanksgiving. All three girls are delighted to go sledding instead of going to school.

DECEMBER



Cozi experiences some growth in employees, plus some nice year-end growth in users. Jan has a lot of fun putting together a year-end photo collage slideshow experience for Facebook users at <http://garage.cozi.com/collage/>.

We publish these stories throughout the year at family.cozi.com/miksovsky.